

New Year's Eves by [maplestreet83](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Angst with a Happy Ending, Between Seasons, Emo Mike Wheeler, and Lucas trying to deal with everything that happened, but in the end they always got each other's backs, but they are two really strong personalities, new year's eve of 83 and 84, these two are best friends, two parts, who can get on each other's nerves

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Summary:

The Sinclair's had hosted a neighborhood New Year's party every year as long as Lucas could remember. The parties were always filled with loud and nosy neighbors, a bunch of snacks and stupid party hats. But the events of November of 1983 brought with them a change.

New Year's Eves

December 31st 1983

Weaving between chatting and laughing adults, Lucas tried to shield his plate filled with food as he walked away from the snacks table and toward the living room. He had to swerve to the right to avoid Mrs. Collins who had suddenly turned, the flute of champagne in her hand tilting dangerously as she did so.

“Oh, I’m sorry, Lucas! Did I spill this on you?” she hurried to ask, her voice a little more high-pitched as it usually was when Lucas greeted her when he happened to pass her walking her dog.

“No, no it’s fine, Mrs. Collins,” he assured her, already taking a step forward, anxious to get out of the crowd of adults.

“Well good. Wouldn’t want to ruin that stylish shirt of yours,” Mrs. Collins commented, gesturing her hand and the glass in it toward Lucas’s new red button up.

“Thanks, I actually just got it from my grandma for Christmas,” Lucas answered, wanting to be polite, but secretly bouncing on the balls of his feet, ready to leave the conversation.

“Oh, that’s great! How is she anyway? Your mom told me that...” Mrs. Collins asked, but her quick chatter was interrupted by something catching her eye somewhere back over Lucas’s shoulder.

“Cynthia! Oh, excuse me, I simply must go and talk to her. But it was great talking to you, Lucas, you’re turning into such a nice young man!” Mrs. Collins gushed, patting Lucas’s shoulder before pushing past him into the kitchen.

“Thank you,” Lucas said after her, his voice quieting as he noticed she had already disappeared into the loud crowd. Letting out a breath of relief, he kept on making his way to the living room. In the doorway he passed his mom, who was chatting with some work friends.

“Did you get the chance to try the food yet? How’s the spinach dip? I tried a new recipe and I want to know if you liked it,” she asked, reaching out her hand to tidy his curly hair.

“I haven’t had any of the dip, but it looks good. Going to have some now, and bringing some to Mike too,” Lucas answered, cocking his head toward the living room couch where he had last seen Mike sitting.

“Oh, that’s nice,” Mrs. Sinclair said, her tone and expression softening as she turned slightly away from her work friends, lowering her voice. “The poor boy’s barely eaten anything the whole night, and he’s getting so skinny these days. You’re sure there’s nothing wrong with him? You know you can talk to your dad and I if that were the case, right?” A clump rose to Lucas’s throat and he gripped onto the yellow ceramic plate a bit harder than necessary before saying:

“Oh, it’s nothing mom. I guess he’s still just shaken up by everything that happened with Will and all.” His mom pursed her lips together, nodding her head slowly in understanding, before looking over the crowd to the living room, trying to spot where Mike was sitting.

“Alright, I understand. It must’ve been hard, you all being so close. And if it’s still bothering you, just let me know. Talking about things like these always helps, you know that right?” she asked, turning her earnest gaze to Lucas, setting her hand on his shoulder. The constricting feeling in his throat grew stronger and Lucas could practically feel the words trying to escape his mouth, telling his mom about what had really happened that night in November, about the horrible monster whose towering height and terrifying screeches still haunted his dreams, about the dark red blood spilling from the agents’ eyes and the sickening sound their bodies had made as they hit the floor, the floor of the same hallway he walked along at school every day. And about how after ten minutes of screaming her name, asking her to come back, his voice cracking and getting scratchy, Mike had slowly given up, sliding down to sit against the lockers lining the dark hallway, tears staining his cheeks, his gaze broken as he stared blankly forward. And how Lucas had felt so utterly helpless as he and Dustin stood in the hallway next to him, not knowing what to say or do, just feeling so so tired.

But instead of telling her all of that, Lucas just faked a slight smile on his face and nodded, saying:

“Yeah I know, I’ll tell you if I want to talk. Thanks mom.”

“Anytime, sweetie. But go ahead and eat, and tell me what you thought about the dip, I was thinking of making some for that church potluck next month,” she said, her tone shifting back to cheerful as she started to turn back to the other guests. With a nod Lucas continued on his way, dodging Erica and some other neighborhood kids running past with obnoxious party blowers. He finally made it to the back corner of the living room which was mostly quiet, as midnight was still a few hours away and the crowd hadn’t gathered by the tv yet. As Lucas walked closer, he could see the programming had just turned from some Dynasty re-runs to commercials, but Mike seemed unaffected either way, his unfocused eyes on the screen.

“Got some food,” Lucas announced, sitting down next to him on the couch and setting the plate down on the coffee table. “Had to fight with Greg Davies for the last piece of pecan pie, but it’s so good that it was so worth it.”

“Thanks,” Mike simply said, turning to him quickly with a tight smile and picking up a peanut butter cookie from the plate and turning back to the tv.

“No problem,” Lucas answered, trying his best to ignore Mike’s flat tone of voice as he scooped up some of his mom’s spinach dip with a chip. It was as great as he had imagined. They ate in silence for a while, watching tv as it turned back from the commercials to the soap opera.

“So, anything major happen I should know about? Any long-lost siblings turned up or any secret evil twins?” Lucas asked, trying to lighten the mood. Dustin was usually the one to do that, but he was spending the night with some family and the new year’s parties were usually just for Maple Street residents anyway.

“No, do you think I actually watched this crap?” Mike snapped, his eyes squinting as he peered at Lucas.

"Dude calm down, it was a joke," Lucas defended himself and Mike rolled his eyes, leaning against the back of the couch, crossing his arms over his Christmas sweater his mom had made him wear for the party. Silence fell between them again as they passively watched the tv, drowning out the happy chatter of the party. Lucas worked on the plate of food and saw how Mike bounced his knee anxiously, a habit he had always had but which has become more prominent in the past weeks.

"Everything okay? Did something happen, did you hear something?" Lucas asked in a hushed tone, turning away from the other party goers.

"No I didn't hear anything," Mike said, his hushed voice tense and annoyed. "And now I'm being dragged to go to this stupid party while I could be back home trying to listen for something," he muttered, side-eying the room and the people in it. Lucas bit his tongue, he knew Mike didn't mean it but hearing him call his family's party stupid still hurt. His mom and dad really put a lot of work and effort in organizing it each year, and it wasn't like the Wheeler's annual Fourth of July parties were any better. And he knew Mike wasn't okay and he was just showing it by being irritable and snapping at people easily, but he was getting a little tired of Mike getting to act that way while he and Dustin had to just take it and pretend they were fine. Some of these days he was going to have enough and just say that to Mike's face. Lucas stayed silent, but Mike could probably see the tension on his face as he glanced at him with his brow knit in confusion. Mike was just about to say something before Mr. Sinclair came over, asking them to bring some more ice from the freezer in the garage. The two boys got up, not saying anything as they weaved through the crowd and headed toward the garage, the tension hanging heavy between them.

"Okay there's some ice in here," Lucas said, his voice trailing off as he flipped on the lights in the garage and headed over to the freezer. Mike said nothing but followed along and Lucas could practically hear the side-eyed glances he was giving his way. Lucas opened the lid of the old freezer chest and started to rummage through it for the ice, feeling Mike's presence by his side the whole time, the tension heightened by the cold air coming from the open freezer. With a

heavy sigh, Lucas straightened his back, tired of waiting for Mike to be the one to open his mouth first.

“Okay, what is it?”

“Nothing, I’m fine,” Mike said, shoving his hands into his pockets.

“Cut the shit, Mike. It’s so clear that you’re not fine so stop being such a drama queen and tell me what’s going on? There’s no one here, you can tell me,” Lucas countered, his voice a little more tense than he had intended.

“Well I’m sorry I don’t act like nothing ever happened and that I’m all okay. I can’t do that. I’m not like *some* people who go on like nothing ever happened, not caring at all,” Mike said, his voice louder and tense, anger seeping into it.

“Oh, so you’re saying that I didn’t care?”

“Well clearly, cause you’re the one going around like nothing ever happened, talking about games and movies and stupid new year’s parties like nothing has changed. Everyone is; you, Dustin, my parents; it’s like I’m the only one that actually cares about what happened!” Mike continued, lifting his hand up in frustration, a mix of pain and anger clear on his face.

“Did you forget that I was there too? I saw her vanish into air! Do you think I’ve forgotten about that? Do you think I don’t wonder if I had been a better shot, she wouldn’t have had to go against the demogorgon on her own in the first place?” Lucas nearly shouted, letting the frustration pour out, the lump in his throat returning along with the guilt. Maybe if he hadn’t yelled at her she wouldn’t have run away and been seen at that store. Maybe if he’d seen the lab trucks sooner they would’ve been able to escape without a fight. Maybe if he had talked to Mike right after everything happened, known what to say to him to make it all better, things wouldn’t be this tense between them now. Mike stared at him silently, knitting his brow in thought. Lucas sighed, trying to swallow the lump in his throat as he continued:

“But I don’t know what I should do about it, cause when me and

Dustin did try to talk about her at first, we saw how bad you felt about it, so we agreed to not talk about her at all then, though it would be better for you. But this moping around and swallowing in pity or guilt or whatever it is you do in your basement all day isn't much better. You gotta stop acting like you are the only person affected by this."

"Oh yeah? Well what would you have me do then? You signed the same papers as I did, we can't talk to anyone about this," Mike questioned, crossing his arms across his chest again.

"Yeah I know, but you can talk to us, or Nancy, or Hopper or someone. My mom always says that it always helps to talk about..." Lucas explained, trying to calm his voice, but Mike cut him off, his eyes huge in mad shock:

"You didn't tell her, right? What the hell Lucas! We can't say anything about her to anyone, it'll get her in even more danger, they're still after her, and..."

"Of course I didn't tell my mom! And come on, Mike! Be realistic!" Lucas shouted in frustration, failing to remain calm and understanding.

"It's been what, six or seven weeks now, and even if she did kill the demogorgon and survive, there's no way she has survived in the Upside Down for this whole time! Will was nearly dead after one week, let alone seven!"

"I told you, I saw her! She was right outside my house!" Mike yelled, instinctively pointing toward the door leading outside.

"Yeah well even if she was, she wouldn't be any better off surviving outside for seven weeks in the cold and snow," Lucas said, rubbing his temples with his fingertips. Did he really have to say it out loud?

"You saw what she can do, she can for sure survive outside!"

"Maybe, but for seven weeks? And with those people after her?" Mike tried to answer but no words came out as he sputtered, his mouth opening and closing as he shifted in place in frustration.

“Everyone can see how much this is eating at you, Mike. I even heard some neighbors here talking about how weird you’ve been lately. Don’t you think it would be better for you to just be realistic and accept that she might be dead?” Lucas said, his voice cold and affectless, instantly regretting saying the last word as he saw Mike’s face just crumble before the anger rose back onto it.

“Screw you Lucas! Screw you!” Mike yelled at him, but Lucas could hear the pain in his voice, and see the tears forming in the corners of his eyes before he turned around and stormed off, leaving him alone in the garage, the bright yellow light and the cold air of the still open freezer surrounding him. Lucas closed the lid of the freezer and leaned against it, lifting his hand up to rub at his eyes, which too were starting to fill with some stubborn tears he had been trying to keep in for the last weeks. Fine then. Back to the silence. At least it was better than this.

December 31st 1984

“Lucas do you remember where the party hats are?” Mrs. Sinclair called him from the kitchen as he walked past, desperate to get out of the loud and crowded living room and wanting to go to his room.

“Mom, why do we even need those?” he asked, throwing his head back in frustration as he stopped in the doorway.

“Wearing party hats for the midnight group picture is a tradition, hun! You used to love it!” his mom said, rummaging through a kitchen cabinet.

“Well yeah, when I was like seven,” Lucas countered.

“Wait when did you stop being seven? I could’ve sworn you just had your birthday!” his dad said as he appeared in the doorway, a teasing grin on his face as he reached out to ruffle Lucas’s hair.

“Ugh, I’m going to my room,” Lucas said as he ducked out of his dad’s reach, rolling his eyes but still fighting a smile from forming on

his face. The noises from the party got gradually more muffled as he made his way to his room and once he shut the door behind him, they were almost silent.

“Here you go, man. There wasn’t any ginger ale, but I got you a Sprite,” Lucas said as he walked away from the door, tossing the can to Mike who was sitting on the floor, playing Stargate. After they had gotten a new tv to the living room, and after a lot of convincing, Lucas had gotten the permission to have the old tv in his room so he could play Atari on it.

Mike was caught off guard, dropping the can which rolled away.

“Hey! A heads up would’ve been nice,” he commented, reaching out to grab the can before it rolled under the dresser.

“Sorry, I didn’t know you would’ve been busy playing,” Lucas said, sitting down on his desk chair and swiveling around in it. “Cause, you know, I asked you to wait for me to start the game and all,” he continued, opening his can of Coke with a fizz and taking a sip.

“Okay, not fair. I was just checking out the settings and getting a feel for it and I guess I slipped on the controls and accidentally started a new game,” Mike explained innocently, opening his can too.

“Oh the joystick just happened to slip?” Lucas asked, in mock surprise, and Mike rolled his eyes at him and flipped him the bird while taking a drink. Lucas scoffed, getting down from the chair and sitting on the carpet next to Mike, connecting the other controller to the console. He had gotten Stargate for Christmas and this was the first time Mike had been able to come and play it, as he had spent most of his break either visiting family or in the cabin visiting El. She had had her first real Christmas and Mike had been really focused on making the holiday perfect for her. It was almost gross how sweet it all was.

“I was kinda surprised you came today,” Lucas said, trying to sound nonchalant as he rebooted the console, getting it ready for multiplayer mode. “Thought you’d had some syrupy night filled with new year's traditions all planned out.”

“And bail out on you and let you suffer through this alone? No way dude,” Mike said, gesturing toward the living room where there was an eruption of laughter as if on cue.

“Plus my mom insisted on me coming, so don’t flatter yourself too much,” he added with a smirk, taking a sip of his soda as the screen came back to life.

“I’ll take it,” Lucas said, scrolling through the menu and adjusting the settings ready for multiplayer mode.

“Thanks for coming, though,” he added as the new game started to load. “After how shitty the party last year was. After how shitty *I* was.”

“Well to be fair I was pretty shitty too,” Mike said, staring straight ahead at the loading bar on the screen. “Last year... I guess I was just feeling so helpless and mad all the time. And I had no idea who to blame it on. So I guess I just took it out on you that day. And I should’ve had done that. You were just being reasonable.”

“Yeah but I could’ve said it differently. I was being way too harsh on you,” Lucas said, still not facing Mike, instead taking a sip of Coke while they waited for the game to load. It’s not like they didn’t talk, but it had been a while since they had talked so openly. Especially after the fight they’d had at the party last year.

“Maybe a bit. But you were being honest. And yeah I was mad at you but I guess I kinda appreciated you being honest too. At least I do now,” Mike said, looking down at the joystick in his hands. Lucas nodded silently and he could feel a silent agreement between them.

“But it’s all in the past now, right? We’re good?” Mike asked, turning to face Lucas, his face apologetic and sincere. Lucas let out a breath and nodded before spitting into his hand and extending it out.

“We’re good,” he proclaimed as a grin spread on Mike’s face and he too spit into his palm and shook Lucas’s hand.

“Won’t mean I’ll go easy on you, though!” Lucas added, quickly grabbing the joystick as the game finally came to life.

"I'd be mad at you if you would," Mike said, scrambling to get his bearings too as the game started, the sounds of the bleeping sound effects and their shouts and cursing filling the room.

And when a few hours later they were both squeezed into a group picture, ridiculously bright and colorful party hats on their heads, they both agreed that maybe 1985 was starting out to be a pretty great year.

Author's Note:

I've wanted to write about Mike and Lucas's friendship for the longest time and recently seeing a post that reminded me of how sad and broken Mike was after El disappeared I was inspired to write this, but writing from Lucas's perspective. I hope you liked it!